

Reflections

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On the Move with Formative Assessment

Marney Cox, Kevin Drinkard,
Ellen Moir and Wendy Baron
plan NTC FAS implementation.

by Ellen Moir, *NTC Executive Director*

I am encouraged to see that policy makers and educators across the country are recognizing the need for quality teacher induction, and that increasing numbers of school systems are creating programs to support teachers just entering the profession. We have learned that it is crucial to do more than give our new teachers a key to a classroom and a pat on the back as they enter our schools each year. It is vital to build induction programs not only to support our new teachers, but also to encourage leadership capacity by tapping the knowledge and skills of our veteran teachers. Through this type of in-depth and inclusive induction program we can have a lasting impact on classroom practices and school communities.

Critical to teacher development is the practice of capturing and using assessment data to guide the support of our new teachers. A carefully developed formative assessment system embedded with appropriate tools can provide rich collaboration and thoughtfully structured opportunities for veteran and



novice teachers. We have been developing such a system during the course of our sixteen years of work with thousands of beginning teachers here in the Santa Cruz/Silicon Valley New Teacher Project and in partner programs across the country.

By integrating assessment tools in the daily practice of teachers, we have seen novice teachers in collaboration with their mentors, make great strides in their professional growth as these tools become a natural part of their thinking and learning. We believe such a formative assessment system encourages

new teachers to experience the steady, thoughtful process of growth and development that will make them confident and successful in their classrooms. Mentors, too, become successful in meeting the needs of their beginning teachers by clearly delineating areas of focus for the new teacher's growth, and accelerating their development. Additionally, we have seen that mentors, too, are challenged to think deeply about their own practice as they continue to develop and refine their mentoring skills.

ELLEN MOIR *continued on p. 17*



The Role of Formative Assessment in Induction

by Janet Gless, NTC Associate Director

Effective, high quality induction programs have two important goals: introduce beginning teachers to professional norms that will help them sustain high levels of practice throughout their careers, and accelerate the advancement of their classroom practice to ensure the highest levels of student learning. Induction programs that embed formative assessment strategies in their mentoring practices will simultaneously advance these goals.

Formative assessment structures not only help beginning teachers identify and strive for high levels of classroom instruction, but also establish

Assessment data help ensure that our teaching is responsive to the needs of all our students.

professional norms of inquiry and lifelong learning. They help beginning teachers assess their emerging practice to identify areas of strength and areas for professional growth.

Outstanding classroom teachers everywhere use an array of assessment tools and strategies to better understand student academic needs, design appropriate instruction, and document learning. Assessment data help ensure that our teaching is responsive to the needs of all our students. Mentors need ways of assessing their mentees if they are to provide the most effective assistance.

Formative assessment is very different from the types of professional assessments most teachers have experienced in their careers. Unlike traditional forms of evaluation, formative assessment involves an ongoing process of data collection and data analysis to inform next steps. Such data are not used for evaluation. Instead, the collection and use of the data are determined collaboratively by the mentor and beginning teacher.

Formative assessment has three essential elements: standards that describe best practice and against which a teacher assesses his or her instructional practices; criteria that enable the teacher to measure growth and development; and evidence that demonstrates the achievement.

Standards

Professional teaching standards provide mentors and beginning teachers a common and comprehensive framework to focus their work. The language of the standards helps mentor and

novice communicate clearly about teaching and what ambitious levels of practice might look like. They are especially useful for first-time mentors as they learn to articulate best practice.

Characteristics of Formative Assessment

- Ongoing measurement of growth over time
 - Objective and data-based
 - Responsive to teacher's developmental needs
 - Interactive and collaborative
 - Involving a variety of assessments
 - Fostering an internal locus of control
 - Based upon professional standards
-

The standards also help put an individual instance of teaching practice into a professional context. For example, the challenge of a student who is not completing assignments might be addressed by exploring Planning and Designing Learning Experiences for All Students or Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning. By providing this “bigger picture,” standards ensure that mentor and beginning teacher examine the full range of teaching practice including areas that might otherwise be overlooked.

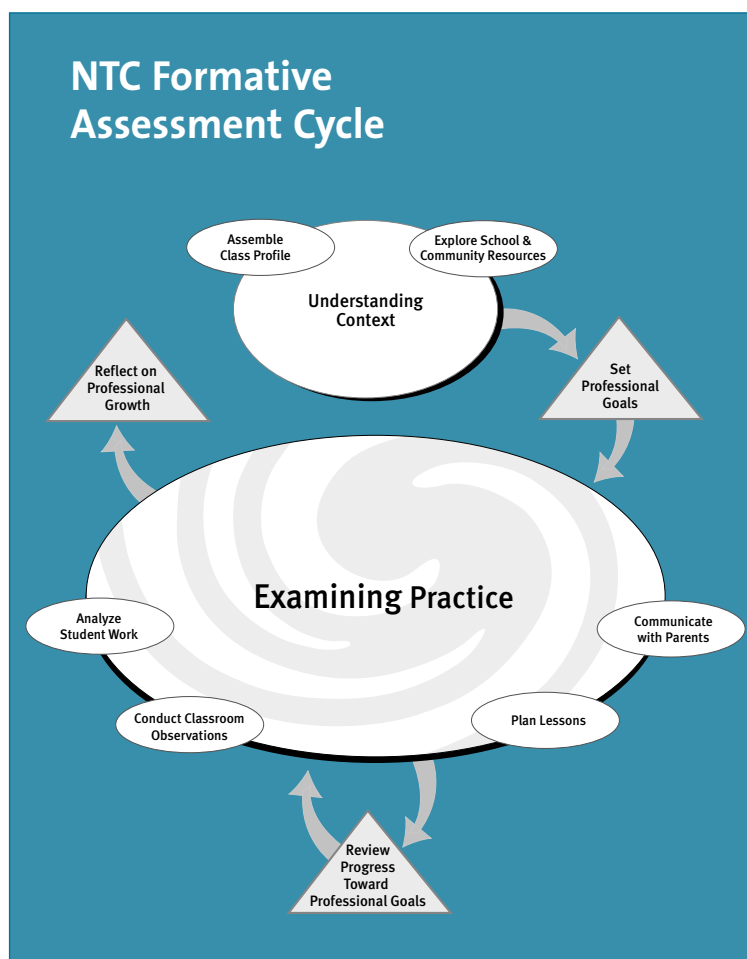
A number of states and professional organizations have created standards that describe the highest levels of professional performance. Among these are the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

California induction programs use the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP)* which emerged from the state's induction efforts and were adopted for statewide use in 1997. The *CSTP* capture the complexity of teaching and the interrelatedness of the various knowledge, skills, attitudes and responsibilities that comprise professional practice. Designed to be used regardless of grade level or subject matter area, the six *CSTP* are used across a continuum of teacher development.

The *CSTP* are distinctive in that they include a set of reflective, yet specific, *Indicator Questions*. This unique design helps teachers understand what a standard might look like in practice or articulate what they are already doing. The question also helps guide mentoring conversations.

Criteria

When teachers compare their practice to a set of professional standards, it is important to have criteria against which they can assess their level of proficiency. The NTC has created the *Continuum of Teacher Development* that describes five levels of development for each *CSTP* standard element: *Beginning, Emerging, Applying, Integrating, Innovating*.



To convey that teaching is a developmental process, the beginning level of performance is not described in deficit terms but rather as level of performance in which beginning teachers can take pride and from which they can immediately begin to advance their practice.

The *Continuum of Teacher Development* encourages teachers to self-assess realistically and with the understanding that ongoing development is a professional expectation. As the beginning teacher and mentor collect evidence of the teacher's practice, the *Continuum* enables them to make judgments about

their teaching to identify successes and challenges. The *Continuum* criteria help a teacher set realistic and specific goals for professional growth.

Evidence

Evidence, the documentation of a beginning teacher's professional experiences, is critical if a teacher is to learn from and advance that practice. Evidence not only captures what might otherwise be lost or distorted by memory, it also helps provide a focus. Evidence is collected, examined, and assessed against professional standards and criteria.

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Analysis of Student Work for Responsive Teaching



Mentor Laura Gschwend and teacher Lalita Aisola co-design a differentiated lesson.

by Laura Gschwend, NTC Outreach Coordinator

If Guskey and Huberman (1995) are correct in asserting that two teachers working together collaboratively raise their productivity by 75% and the quality of their work by even more, NTC's formative assessment tool, *Analysis of Student Work*, is sure to propel beginning teacher learning forward. That is exactly what we have experienced working with twenty-four new teachers at Evergreen Valley High School (EVHS) in San Jose. Here is the story of Lalita Aisola, one of EVHS' new teachers.

During the past two years, Lalita emerged as a teacher leader, able to use the *Analysis*

of Student Work to design and deliver complex, differentiated lessons. Several factors supported her accelerated professional growth.

Since opening, EVHS has married induction goals of new teachers with the professional development goals of veteran teachers. Sixty percent of the staff used *Analysis of Student Work* twice during the school's month-long summer institute and 85% used it once a semester during the academic school year. Both new teachers and academic departments have been trained and regularly apply this analysis, creating great momentum for Lalita to involve both her content area colleagues and her induction mentor in differentiation.

By combining induction with the school's professional development focus, and the entire staff's collaboration, Guskey and Huberman's assertion became reality. *Analysis of Student Work* has significantly increased teaching productivity and quality. As a part of the induction program, I met weekly with Lalita as her mentor.

Lalita and I quickly discovered that unless differentiation occurred at the lesson planning level, it never really transferred to practice. For instance, our coaching discussions about lesson design often led us through the following stages and became the entry points I used as a coach to deepen inquiry and reflection:

Content Standards

What is the targeted content standard? What content specific skills does the student need to know? Who is below, approaching, at, or above the standard?

Assessments

What rubrics or performance assessment measures will allow students to demonstrate proficiency on the standard? When is it appropriate to differentiate assessments? In what ways can formative assessments be differentiated to better motivate students?

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TOOL

Analysis of Student Work

Name: _____ Monitor: _____

Grade Level/Subject Area: _____ Date: _____

Student Work Selected for Analysis: _____ Content Standard: _____

1. Expectations for Student Work/Performance

2. Students' Names

for below standard	approaching standard	meeting standard	exceeding standard
_____% of class	_____% of class	_____% of class	_____% of class

3. Description of Student Performance (one student from each category)

for below standard	approaching standard	meeting standard	exceeding standard

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FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TOOL

Lesson Plan A


Name: _____ Monitor: _____

Date: _____ Lesson Topic: _____

Grade Level/Subject Area: _____

Content Standard: _____

The Essential Components of Differentiated Instruction (ECI) Resource offers specific ideas for differentiating instructional strategies, content, products or assessments in new and varied ways.



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FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TOOL

Lesson Plan B

Name: _____ Monitor: _____

Grade Level/Subject Area: _____ Date: _____

Lesson Topic: _____ Content Standard: _____

The Essential Components of Differentiated Instruction (ECI) Resource offers specific ideas for differentiating instructional strategies, content, products or assessments in new and varied ways.

Learning Outcomes	Key Concepts & Content	Connections to Students' Knowledge, Skills, Experience
Evidence of Learning (Product or Assessment)	Teaching Strategies & Sequence	
	Instruction	
	Guided Practice	
	Extension Activities or Independent Practice	
Materials		

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Pre-Assessments

What kinds of pre-assessments will determine students' prior knowledge, skill, and attitudinal levels? How can those pre-assessments inform instructional decisions, grouping strategies, student goal setting, and differentiation strategies?

Instructional Activities

What instructional activities will move *all students* to meet the standard? What questioning strategies and graphic organizers can be differentiated? When should additional resources be provided? How can students take notes using different methods? How might pacing need to be adapted for some? Who might need accommodations and how do you know?

Lalita and I spent several coaching sessions answering these questions. Trial by fire taught us that cutting short any of these stages produced negative results for students.

Early mistakes also taught us to ensure that the assessment tool accurately measured the standard. This proved to be a harder task than one might think. It was tempting to grade for things (neatness, thoroughness, quality of art work, number of sources, etc.) that didn't assess proficiency on the standard. For example, we learned to look critically at the appropriateness of the rubric to assess persuasive writing, often finding that a rubric downloaded from a teacher web site or adopted from a colleague wasn't aligned with the targeted standard. We learned an important step was to develop or adapt an appropriate rubric.

We also used the *Analysis of Student Work* to make decisions about individual student needs trying out flexible grouping strategies such as common interests, skill levels, prior knowledge, readiness or learning centers. Lalita learned to have some kind of flexible group each period. Because students were in so many different types of

Trial by fire taught us that cutting short any of these stages produced negative results for students.

groups, tracking did not occur. In one unit, Lalita's creative writing students worked in groups to design, write, edit, publish, and disseminate a magazine. Students chose their writing teams based upon interests, learning profiles, and writing goals and negotiated their standards-based grading criteria and work plan.

Other times, we used our findings from the *Analysis of Student Work* to design tiered lessons. Lalita pre-assessed students' performance against the content standards. Students articulated their strengths and identified growth areas both orally and in writing. Students then set learning goals and monitored their own progress. Once they had assessed their performance in relation to a

GSCHWEND *continued on p. 19*



Moving Toward Support and Assessment in Teacher Evaluation

by Clem Donaldson, *Pleasanton Unified School District Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources*

For a number of years before the state adoption of the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP)*, the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, where I served as assistant superintendent, had benefited from an ongoing relationship with the Santa Cruz New Teacher Center. That relationship provided supportive coaching for all teachers new to the profession. Central to this support was the use of the NTC's *Continuum of Teacher Development*, a self-assessment document that clearly delineates developmental teaching abilities.

This coaching relationship also incorporated a formative assessment system based on the collection of many different sources of data upon which the coach and teacher could have an ongoing reflective conversation that would support the growth of the new teacher.

Once the state-adopted *CSTP* and the related and aligned *Continuum* were in place, the District had a strong foundation upon which it could build a professional growth and assessment system that would continue to support teachers throughout their entire career. In this system teachers were seen

as inquirers and collaborators who were focused to meet the needs of the students they served. In essence, that which worked for new teachers would most certainly support the growth of teachers throughout their professional lives.

The teachers' union, district administration, and the board of trustees made a fundamental decision. The annual ritual of teacher evaluation that had

In this system teachers were seen as inquirers and collaborators who were focused to meet the needs of the students they served.

questionable effect would be replaced by a process based on collaboration and coaching. We all believed that guided professional dialogues and sharing of mutual learning would accelerate the growth of teachers and students. We decided to replace the existing teacher evaluation process with a formative assessment and support system based on the following philosophy:

Teaching is a career-long developmental process.

Teaching is a continuous cycle of teaching, assessment, and re-teaching.

Professional standards and a focus on equitable student achievement guide the improvement of practice.

Teacher development occurs best in a collegial and inquiry-oriented environment.

A teacher's professional growth leads to improved student achievement.

In the Pajaro assessment and support system, probationary teachers collaborated with their supervising administrator to develop and document their teaching skills as described in the *CSTP* and now mandated through Senate Bill 2042.

Tenured teachers chose from three different collaborative alternatives. Adult learning theory indicates that learning must be voluntary, adults have differing needs and learning styles, and therefore should be able to choose a format that best supports their growth. In the Pajaro system, teachers could choose a coaching relationship with another teacher or an administrator or develop a portfolio to be shared with other teachers and an administrator.

Tenured teachers were provided the freedom to select an area of inquiry based on



Liz Lyons, Joan Spott, Clem Donaldson, Kim Ortiz, and Laura Strange review the goals of the Tri-Valley Teacher Induction Project in California.

the *CSTP*, that they felt would best support their professional growth and would positively impact student achievement. Collaboration and inquiry were the philosophical basis of all components of the Pajaro system. While the evaluation/assessment support system for both the non-tenured and tenured teachers were standards-based systems, the non-tenured system focused on providing the teacher the support necessary to develop and demonstrate the skills represented by the six domains of the *CSTP*.

After five years of monitoring and refining the system for teacher assessment and professional development, the District began to see the possibility of structuring an administrative support and assessment system based on the tenets that were working so well with teachers. This system also was based on the belief that honest self-reflection and self-assessment, combined with the input and

guidance of a peer/mentor/supervisor, would produce administrative leadership growth and increasing awareness of their potential impact on teaching and learning.

The District again collaborated with the NTC to provide coaching for new principals aligned with the District's Professional Standards for Administrators. New Principal Institutes provided content to support the development of administrators' skills and capacities as emerging instructional leaders.

As teachers were supported by their coach through regular meetings built around ongoing formative assessment, administrators, too, engaged in monthly discussions and reflection on their progress with their supervisors. Similar to the teachers, new administrators were given the support and inquiry-based coaching that allowed them to take risks in a safe environment.

With the passage of Senate Bill 2042, regulating California's teacher credentialing system and setting standards for teacher induction programs, districts statewide are forming consortia to provide quality support for new teachers as they complete their credential requirements. One of these consortia is the Tri-Valley Teacher Induction Project (TV/TIP), composed of the Pleasanton Unified School District, the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District, and the Dublin Unified School District.

The goals of this consortium include:

- Advance teacher performance and instruction for all students
- Increase teacher efficacy and retention
- Promote self-assessment and document growth over time.
- Provide greater depth in professional development

Teachers, administrators, union leaders, and district office personnel from the member districts collaboratively developed this consortium. In June of 2004, TV/TIP became a state-approved induction program. The tenets of the program are based on research indicating that the knowledge of teaching practices, student learning, and standards-based subject matter content, and ultimately the ability to reflect on one's own practice, are the strongest predictors of

DONALDSON *continued on p. 18*



California Induction Program Leaders Share Insights on NTC Formative Assessment System

by Adele Barrett, NTC Research Specialist

NTC recently conducted a survey of California program leads about the NTC Formative Assessment System. They were surveyed before implementing FAS, and again after a year of use. Here are some of the questions and their responses:

What motivated you to choose the NTC Formative Assessment System?

Program leaders' explanations for choosing the NTC FAS focused primarily on its alignment with their district philosophies, general program goals and the needs of their mentors and beginning teachers.

The system's focus on the beginning teacher, rather than the paperwork, was also an important factor. This focus on relationships and the less restrictive nature of the NTC FAS, appeared more aligned with the overall goals for most programs.

Also mentioned were specific NTC FAS strategies including analyzing student work, reflective dialogue, and a focus on student achievement. Many program leads indicated they were influenced by the NTC reputation and philosophy. Prior NTC connections led them to adopt NTC FAS.

What do you hope to achieve as a result of implementing the NTC Formative Assessment System?

Leaders hoped that the system would help beginning teachers improve through professional

development and stronger support. They also hoped that the flexibility and relevant FAS tools would better address their beginning teacher's needs, moving them more rapidly along the continuum. The ultimate goal is an increase in student achievement through the focus on student work.

Quotes from the end of the year illustrate program leads' views on how FAS helped their beginning teachers:

The Formative Assessment System fostered an environment that enabled beginning teachers to meaningfully reflect on their practice, identify strengths, growth areas, and access needed services and professional development.

As a result of FAS, beginning teachers focus on student learning and actually demonstrated application of CSTP [professional teaching standards].

FAS is a more flexible system of support that guides teachers to make curriculum accessible for all students. The tools helped develop reflective practitioners who hold high standards for all.

Program leads felt the emphasis on a mentor driven rather than a paper driven system, would create greater accountability and buy-in among support providers, while increasing their confidence and competence. They saw the practicality and flexibility of the system helping their support providers be more successful.

Program leads felt the emphasis on a mentor driven rather than a paper driven system, would create greater accountability and buy-in among support providers.

Leads noted that the implementation of FAS would assist them in meeting program goals: creating a higher quality program, and ultimately improving results. They hoped to have better retention of their support providers and beginning teachers.

Following a year of work with the New Teacher Center FAS, program leads had the following to say about what they had achieved for their support providers:

FAS fostered a better sense of purpose, ownership and awareness of their role.

A manageable and doable formative assessment system. The professional development focuses on developing and improving coaching skills.

Our support providers have positive attitudes. FAS is manageable despite large caseloads.

Support providers show pride in the profession. It has improved practice and increased reflection.

An array of resources that assist mentors in working on a deeper level with their beginning teachers.

What do you anticipate will be challenges with this implementation?

Leads were concerned about the amount of training necessary to transition their support providers into using the new system. Other concerns centered on elements and difficulties involved with the transition.

However, once implementation began, program leads' concerns became more focused, centering on timing, finding release time for support providers and getting materials to them. The discussion of challenges also revealed a desire for NTC support, by providing trainings and making NTC staff available.

What successes are you experiencing with implementing NTC FAS?

Program leads were surveyed again as they began the implementation of the NTC Formative Assessment System.

Program Information

In June of 2003, prior to implementing NTC FAS, program leads were asked to report on aspects of their current induction programs. After using NTC FAS, the same questions were asked in March 2004. Response percentages are shown below:

	2002–2003	2003–2004
Mentors report satisfaction in using the formative assessment system. AGREE	21%	91%
Our program has an effective formative assessment system in place for beginning teachers. AGREE	39%	95%
The formative assessment system we're using assists in improving the practice of beginning teachers. AGREE	59%	97%

Leads commented on finding satisfaction and excitement with the system from support providers, site administrators and beginning teachers. Use of the *Collaborative Logs* was cited as an early success of implementation. Some program leads have also seen increased contact between support providers and their beginning teachers following the FAS implementation.

After a year of work with the New Teacher Center FAS program leads commented on the success of implementation:

The flexibility, self-determination and relevance of FAS has encouraged all participants to engage in the process and program in a more positive and meaningful way.

The mentors and beginning teachers found FAS to be a system they could embrace throughout the year.

Most stakeholders are thrilled with FAS. Our goal is supporting beginning teachers to be successful and this system is a tool to achieve that.

The system meets needs of beginning teachers, is user friendly and has timely trainings and support.

We have seen more thoughtful work from our mentors and beginning teachers. There is a renewed sense of the importance of our work

Mentors are appreciative of FAS flexibility, and the training was helpful to their mentoring, coaching skills. ■

Individualized Learning Plan: Bringing Goals to Life

A Teacher's Perspective

by Stephen Kopold, *Teacher, Harbor High School, Santa Cruz, CA*

One of the most important aspects of becoming a skilled teacher is the willingness to evaluate and critique your work. Football players, under the guidance of their coaches, spend hours looking at tapes of practices and games so that they can better understand their actions on the field in hopes of showing improvement in the next game.

The collaboration between a mentor and beginning teacher is very much the same. Playing back the mental tape of a day in the classroom, my mentor, John Moir, could evaluate my actions in the field. We could use these images to formulate, evaluate, and update the game plan during the course of the year. The use of the NTC's FAS tools ensured that this process was effective and rewarding.

The use of the assessment tools provided the foundation for the interactions between John and myself. It is essential that the mentor impress upon the beginning teacher that the use of the assessment tools, especially the *Individual Learning Plan*, *Mid-Year Review*, and *Professional Growth Reflections*, are important to the reflection process. It is difficult for a beginning teacher to look very far ahead, especially during the first year in the classroom.

It seemed impossible to determine what I wanted to accomplish over the entire year. But I was much more up to the task when I realized that completing the *Individual Learning Plan* would create a reference point to evaluate my progress during the year.

The importance of the reflection process was obvious to me as I completed the *Mid-Year Review*. Each of my classes was one semester in length and I had to re-write the curriculum for them. As I completed the review I easily recognized my progress and realized that I had successfully revamped each class. It was also much easier to determine what still needed to be done. Sharing the *Mid-Year Review* with John was encouraging because we could see that my work for the next semester would be spent focusing on a few specific items that would make each class even better. It provided our focus for the second semester.

In order to accurately complete the *Mid-Year Review*, John and I referred to the *Collaborative Assessment Logs*. We remembered that there had been a critical day during the first semester when it did not seem that anything would work out. In fact, I was at the crucial juncture as to whether it was worth

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TOOL

Individual Learning Plan

Name: _____ Mentor: _____ Date: _____
Grade Level/Subject Area: _____

Professional Teaching Standard: Supporting Goal: Plan: Evidence:	Professional Teaching Standard: Supporting Goal: Plan: Evidence:
Content Area Focus: Overarching Professional Goal: Impact on Student Learning:	
Professional Teaching Standard: Supporting Goal: Plan: Evidence:	Professional Teaching Standard: Supporting Goal: Plan: Evidence:

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FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TOOL

Mid-Year Review

Name: _____ Mentor: _____ Date: _____
Grade Level/Subject Area: _____

Professional Teaching Standard: Supporting Goal: Plan: Evidence:	Professional Teaching Standard: Supporting Goal: Plan: Evidence:
Content Area Focus: Overarching Professional Goal: Impact on Student Learning:	
Professional Teaching Standard: Supporting Goal: Plan: Evidence:	Professional Teaching Standard: Supporting Goal: Plan: Evidence:

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FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TOOL

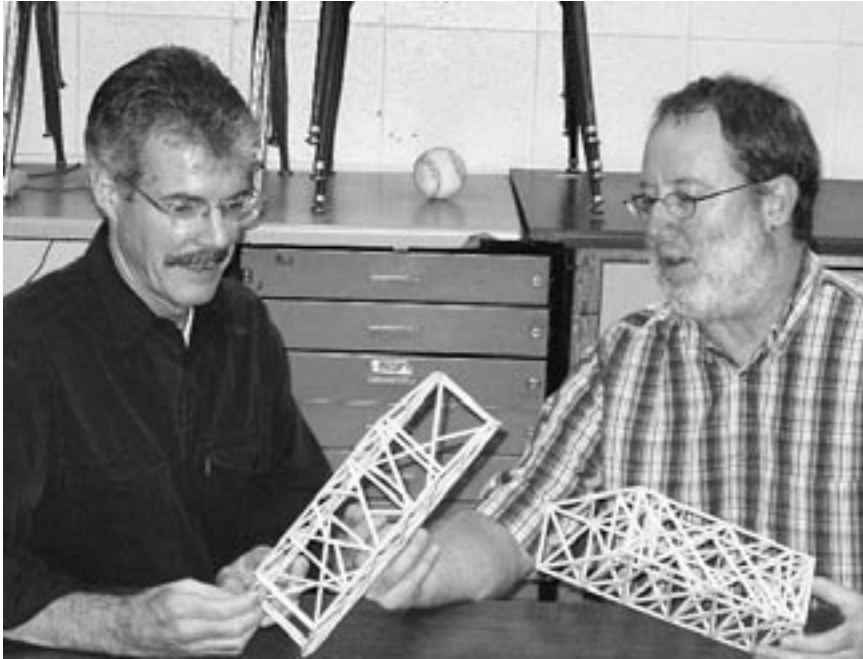
Professional Growth Reflections

Name: _____ Mentor: _____ Date: _____
Grade Level/Subject Area: _____

Content Area Focus:
Overarching Professional Goal:

Successes			
Significant Decisions & Actions			
Next Steps			

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Beginning teacher Steve Kopald, right, shows student projects to his advisor, John Moir.

...the work John and I accomplished together would influence me for the rest of my teaching career.

continuing at all. In what had to be the most important meeting of our time together and a perfect example of why the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project is so important, together we formulated a plan that salvaged the semester.

When John and I got together to complete the *Professional Growth Reflections*, we shared the satisfaction of a job well done. The tribulations that characterize a school year had been neatly summarized as we looked through the written record of our work together.

Completing this process was the ultimate form of reflection and cemented the bond between us. We had met great challenges and succeeded. As a result, we had a documented history of how to use the process of reflection to my benefit. And I knew that even though our formal working relationship was ending, the work that John and I accomplished together would influence me for the rest of my teaching career. ■

An Advisor's Perspective

by John Moir, Santa Cruz New Teacher Project Advisor

My weekly visit in early October last year to one of my beginning teachers, Steve Kopald, did not bring good news. The structure of student project stations he'd been given for his high school Introduction to Technology classes wasn't working. By the end of our afternoon meeting, it became clear the curriculum upon which the class rested was unworkable.

The start of Steve's school year had already been tough—he began the semester with both his classrooms still under construction. Now, the collapse of the tech class curriculum loomed large. We patched together some lessons to carry Steve through the week and began to design a new plan for the semester, but I left our meeting with a sense of foreboding.

We had three advantages in overcoming this obstacle: We worked well together, Steve possessed a talent for implementing lesson ideas, and we had powerful mentoring tools to guide us.

The story of the challenges Steve faced last year demonstrates the strength of three tools that anchor our work: *ILP* goals, *Mid-Year Review*, and *Professional Growth Reflections*. This triad of tools stabilizes the trajectory of a new teacher's year by providing time to take a longer view. And, like Janus, the Roman god who saw in two directions at once, these tools offer insights into both the past and the future.

At the school year's start, new teachers often have difficulty seeing beyond tomorrow's lesson. The *ILP* focus on

JOHN MOIR *continued on p. 18*



Combining Assistance and Assessment in Teacher Induction

by Brian P. Yusko, *Cleveland State University Assistant Professor, Curriculum and Foundations*

Peter Elbow (1983) has argued that good teachers learn to embrace the conflicting roles of assistance—supporting and praising students—and assessment—upholding high standards for student progress. Teacher induction programs have traditionally shied away from this tension by separating assistance from assessment, concerned that mentors’ evaluations might undermine trust and make it harder for new teachers to share concerns or listen to suggestions. However, with an evolving consensus around teaching standards and pushes for greater teacher accountability, induction programs are moving beyond merely retaining new teachers toward promoting professional growth by identifying and communicating new teachers’ needs for improvement.

Two induction programs that combine assistance and assessment in different ways are the Cincinnati Peer Assistance and Evaluation Program (PAEP) and the New Teacher Center (NTC). In the PAEP, mentors (called consulting teachers or CTs) spend most of their time completing six formal observations which provide both formative and summative evaluation of new teachers. CTs spend hours producing write-ups that include descriptions of the classroom

environment, the lesson itself, comments, suggestions, and recommendations, and a list of all the assistance provided. In the past, write-ups evaluated lessons as “satisfactory” or “less than satisfactory.” Now, lesson evaluations use language from district-created rubrics. CTs use these write-ups as the basis for post-observation conferences, and copies are distributed to new teachers, building principals, the personnel office, and the PAEP steering panel. In the spring, CTs use write-ups as evidence for recommending whether new teachers’ contracts should be renewed.

Although the write-ups appear to emphasize evaluation, they actually demonstrate the intertwining of assistance and assessment. As assistance, they offer a vehicle to share feedback and provide specific recommendations to improve instruction. The time between observations and conferences allows CTs to analyze lessons, determine appropriate feedback, and consider how to communicate assessments during post-observation conferences. CTs view themselves first as advocates to help new teachers succeed, but their focus on student needs and their desire to maintain professional respect give them courage to act as professional gatekeepers, eliminating poor teachers who fail to progress. The public distribution of documents highlights the goal of holding new teachers accountable to achieve teaching competence.

The NTC offers a contrasting perspective, where assistance is driven by *formative* assessment rather than *summative* evaluation. NTC mentors (Advisors) emphasize the importance of non-judgmental support, and they maintain strict confidentiality. Advisors engage in formative assessment in at least three ways: development of individual learning goals using self-assessment; observations and discussions of teaching; and analysis of student work.

The NTC offers a contrasting perspective, where assistance is driven by *formative* assessment rather than *summative* evaluation.

Advisors help new teachers assess themselves using the *Continuum of Teacher Development*, which describes five levels of performance for the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession*. This assessment leads to an *Individual Learning Plan*, which guides assistance and serves as the backdrop for an “end-of-year review” to identify steps for the coming year. Advisors visit teachers weekly to observe and talk, using questions from a *Collaborative Assessment Log*. This form is divided into four quadrants, with teaching standards at the bottom. Quadrants invite *assessment* through reflection on successes and challenges and promote



Linda Germa and Brian Schaffran, teachers at Cleveland School of the Arts, examine features of a video camera.

assistance by asking for next steps for both advisor and new teacher. Copies are shared only with the new teacher and kept in the program office.

During *Analysis of Student Work*, advisors and new teachers sort student papers into four piles: exceeding, meeting, approaching standard, or significantly below. While sorting, the advisor and new teacher analyze the work based on criteria. After sorting, the new teacher selects one from each pile to identify next steps for particular students as well as overall teaching implications. Afterward, the advisor reflects on the impact on the new teacher's instructional practices. This process serves as both formative assessment of teaching practice and helps novices acknowledge capabilities and learning needs of individual students.

In both programs, mentors set high expectations, assess new teachers' strengths and weaknesses, communicate assessments, and offer recommendations. The PAEP and NTC demonstrate that it is not only possible to combine

assistance and assessment, but also that the two functions can be complementary—assessment guiding assistance and assistance providing assessment opportunities. PAEP staff often state, *You cannot assess new teachers unless you first assist them*. This statement can be broadened by adding, *Nor can you assist new teachers without assessing them*. Both programs raise four areas that programs must consider in combining assistance and assessment:

- **Goal-Setting to Promote Developmental Growth.** To what degree do mentors use standards-based assessment to identify goals for new teachers' growth? Do goals shape ongoing assessment and the offering of relevant assistance?
- **Evidence-based Opportunities for Critical Reflection on Teaching.** How do programs use records of teaching practice, e.g. lesson write-ups or student work, as evidence to ground mentoring conversations that contribute to assistance *and* assessment?

• **Respectful Relationships Between Mentors and New Teachers.**

Do mentors develop respectful relationships with new teachers—not by withholding assessment in a risk-free environment of unconditional reassurance and hand-holding, but by providing meaningful assistance driven by assessment?

• **Accountability For New Teacher Development.**

Do mentors have permission and courage to share honest assessments of new teachers' strengths and shortcomings? When new teachers engage in questionable teaching practices or are unreflective, are there mechanisms to enforce mentors' recommendations?

Combining assistance and assessment requires courage to share unpleasant feedback with new teachers and the sophistication to use teaching standards thoughtfully in evidence-based mentoring conversations. Mentors who embrace assistance and assessment may not always make new teachers more comfortable, but they help new teachers improve more than mentors who offer false reassurance while new teachers fret secretly about or remain oblivious to shortcomings. As teacher induction moves beyond the mantra of separating assistance and assessment, program leaders need to experiment with new strategies for combining assistance and assessment, and researchers need to continue learning about which strategies are most likely to promote professional growth. ■



Differentiating Instruction Begins with Data

by Wendy Baron, NTC Associate Director

I can't keep track of all the special services my students receive, Lamis, a beginning special education teacher, told her mentor during one of their early fall meetings.

The mentor responded, We have a tool to help us compile all the assessment data about your students so it will be in one place and easy to reference. Would you like to work on developing a class profile today?

Oh, yes, that would be excellent, Lamis declared.

At the start of the school year, teachers need as much information about their students as possible. Knowing students' learning needs and abilities is essential to create effective instruction and ensure student achievement. Working together to assemble a *Class Profile*, beginning teachers and mentors identify the range of learning needs of a particular class or group of students, to plan flexible groups and differentiate instruction. From this profile, beginning teachers identify a case study student who represents an instructional challenge. Throughout the year, new teachers research the effects of instruction on student achievement and find ways to help all their students learn.

In our experience in the Santa Cruz/Silicon Valley New Teacher Project, few teachers are provided student assessment and other related data by their school or district. However, information about students' special needs, levels of academic performance, home language, migrant status and English Language Development (ELD) levels is critical if teachers are to provide appropriate and effective instruction. The NTC *Formative Assessment System (FAS) Class Profile* was developed to help beginning teachers assemble a profile of a class or group of students to determine flexible instructional groups.

Cathy, a first year fifth grade teacher, realized after a few weeks that only some students were reading at grade level. The literature in the adopted text seemed too difficult for her two special education students and nine English learners, and too easy for eight accelerated students. Cathy quickly assessed her students' fluency and comprehension skills. We asked the bilingual resource specialist for all ELD scores from the CELDT (California English Language Development Test) and the resource specialist for summaries of services provided for Cathy's special education students. We read cum files to identify home languages, students who were migrant, had been retained, or had health problems. Before long, we had developed a document that we would use

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TOOL

Student Data Class Profile—Part I

Name: _____ Mentor: _____ Date: _____

Grade Level/Subject Area: _____

Directions: With your mentor, use available resources from your school and district to compile a class list which delineates the background, needs, and assessment information about your students. Use district or school databases, if available.

Student Name <small>Circle your case study student's name</small>	Primary Language	ELD Level	Migrant	Retained	Special Services	Overnight Accommodations <small>(Specify by Student)</small>	Other-kind of Learning <small>(Specify by Student)</small>
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							
9.							
10.							
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34.							
35.							

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FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TOOL

Instructional Groups Class Profile—Part II

Name: _____ Mentor: _____ Date: _____

Grade Level/Subject Area: _____

To determine instructional groups, use current assessment data and information from Student Data, Class Profile—Part I. Group students for instruction according to learning outcomes in categories, such as:

- English Language Development levels
- Reading levels (or other subject area)
- Special services provided or eligibility
- Learning styles, multiple intelligences, interests
- Other categories relevant to your teaching assignment

Note: Heterogeneous and mixed ability groupings are also extremely important for student learning. These instructional groupings, therefore, should be flexible and used to target instruction in response to particular students' learning needs; they should not become fixed over time.

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In a New Teacher Project Advisor Forum, Marney Cox, Marilyn Torp and Wendy Baron share strategies for using formative assessment tools with novice teachers.

throughout the year to monitor progress and develop flexible instructional groups.

At our next meeting, we used the data from our *Class Profile* to form literature groups so students could read and discuss texts appropriate to their level. During our conversation, Cathy identified several students who were of concern. One student, Carla, an English learner, was reading on third grade level and reluctant to participate in class discussions. Cathy chose Carla as her case study student. We agreed

that whenever we analyzed student work, we would focus on Carla's progress and learning needs. When I observed in class, I gathered data about Carla's participation. We tracked her progress throughout the year, and together developed an understanding of the learning needs of Carla and the subset of English learners she represented.

Throughout the year, we referred to our student data sheet to monitor student progress and re-design instructional groups. Conversations

about the learning needs and abilities of Cathy's students became central to our work. During many meetings, our conversations included small group instruction. Which students are learning together? What are the educational goals of each lesson? How should small groups be organized? Throughout the year, we reviewed assessment data to regularly regroup students.

All teachers need to receive critical data about their students at the start of the school year. At the time of this writing, several districts in our 30-district consortium have created databases that teachers can access on-line through the district web-site. This has streamlined the *Class Profile* process and put the emphasis where it belongs—differentiating instruction to meet the learning needs of students. ■

GLESS *continued from p. 3*

The NTC *Formative Assessment System* provides a set of tools for the new teacher and mentor to collect objective, credible, and useful evidence to examine and analyze together. The evidence collected by *FAS* includes classroom observation data, student work, and lesson plans. These professional artifacts demonstrate the teacher's developing skills and maintain a focus on instruction and student learning. This data will guide a mentor's practice.

By using formative assessment, mentor and beginning teacher engage in inquiry and exploration to establish norms for ongoing improvement toward standards of professional practice. Formative assessment firmly links mentoring to teacher learning and is meaningfully embedded in the mentor's work with new teachers.

Formative assessment encourages curiosity and inquiry, teaching and learning about practice for both the novice teacher and the veteran mentor. It serves as the cornerstone of strong induction programs. ■

Formative assessment firmly links mentoring to teacher learning and is meaningfully embedded in the mentor's work...



Mapleton Applies NTC Formative Assessment

by Jackie Kupushin, Executive Director of Learning Services, Mapleton Public Schools

This year Mapleton Public Schools in Denver, Colorado celebrates the district's 50th anniversary with a renewed challenge: to continue to build programs that demonstrate our unyielding commitment to academic excellence.

As we reinvent our schools to raise student achievement, our new-to-career teachers are receiving increased and better support than they ever have in our system. The New Teacher Center has helped tremendously in our efforts to deliver an effective induction experience for our novice staff—specifically,

by offering and encouraging the use of its formative assessment tools that provide the structure and accountability our induction program was lacking several years ago.

In Mapleton, our full-release mentor coaches begin the year by reviewing each beginning teacher's (BT) pre-service portfolio and looking for evidence of work that supports each of our State's *Colorado Teaching Standards*. As the mentor and BT discuss opportunities for growth for the BT, they create an *Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)* to set some focus areas

for the teacher and mentor at the beginning of the year. The *ILP* is revisited at least three times per year to ensure the BT is making progress in those documented areas.

Additionally, our coaches use the *Collaborative Log* at least once a month to document the reflective conversations that happen between the mentor and BT, and to document next steps for both in moving the BTs practice forward. In using the *Collaborative Log*, the mentor is able to check in with the teacher to ensure follow-through with the action items agreed upon during the last



Second-year teacher Sara Anderson, left, collaborates with her mentor, Beth Ann Rosa.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TOOL
Collaborative Assessment Log

Name: _____ Mentor: _____ Date: _____

Grade Level/Subject Area: _____

What's Working:

Current Focus—Challenges—Concerns:

Teacher's Next Steps:

Mentor's Next Steps:

Next Meeting Date: _____

Focus:

What's Working:

Challenges/Concerns:

Next Meeting Date: _____

Focus:

What's Working:

Challenges/Concerns:

visit. This gives accountability to the mentoring process for both the mentor and BT.

The various observation tools and protocols have also been extremely helpful in making the formal observation process more useful for the BT. The protocols help the mentor focus the new teacher on relevant and appropriate management and instructional strategies before the observation, as well as give

the mentor talking points for the post observation—all in an effort to have the BT walk away with some useful learning to apply in the classroom the very next day.

In year two of our induction program, we shift the focus and the formative assessment tools away from teacher behavior to student learning through the *Analysis of Student Work*. Our second year teachers use this protocol once a quarter, after our district's common quarterly assessments have been given at each grade level for each content area. This tool has really supported our district's expectation for all educators to operate in a standards-based, data driven context.

All of these formative assessment tools are artifacts that add accountability to our

The New Teacher Center has helped... by offering and encouraging the use of its formative assessment tools...

induction program. Most important, they give credence to our district's work with beginning teachers and add the structure needed to move our beginning teachers toward becoming proficient practitioners. ■

ELLEN MOIR *continued from p. 1*

Our ultimate goal is that as beginning teachers exit their induction programs, they not only value the support they received from mentor colleagues, but also value and know how to use effective assessment practices in their classrooms. We hope they see the collaborative aspects of their induction period central to their becoming outstanding teachers and that they not only seek ways to support their school sites as true learning communities, but that they also continue to examine and develop their practice throughout their professional careers.



...the standards and common language stimulate professional growth for veteran and novice alike.

It is with this vision we encourage you to read this issue on the application and importance of formative assessment in our continuing effort to provide the best system of support to nurture our newest colleagues. A systematic assessment system set in place early on embeds the habit of personal reflection

on one's practice, and the standards and common language stimulate professional growth for veteran and novice alike. This ongoing examination of professional growth over time will result in committed and successful teachers for all of our students. They deserve no less. ■

DONALDSON *continued from p. 7*

student success and teacher professional growth. As Kim Ortiz, TV/TIP Director, suggests, this research forms the foundation of the consortium's commitment to deliver teacher-centered services.

The three participating districts have enthusiastically embraced the work of the teacher coaches. Districts are seen as equal participants, and all new teachers receive individual support in refining their skills and abilities. The program has been recognized by the Board of Trustees and the union leadership of each district as having a positive impact on the three

Teachers in a learning community... are not "in-serviced." Instead they engage in continuous inquiry about teaching. They are researchers, students of teaching, who observe others teach, have others observe them, talk about teaching, and help other teachers. In short, they are professionals.

Roland Barth, *Improving Schools From Within*

districts' most important resource: their new teachers.

In each district, the question now is how to extend this inquiry and standards-based support to our tenured teachers.

The discussion reflects the need to change the current teacher evaluation to reflective support and assessment that encourages ongoing formative assessment and sharing best practices. ■

JOHN MOIR *continued from p. 11*

yearlong plans not only helps them set a direction but creates a benchmark to measure progress. As Steve and I devised and implemented a new tech class curriculum, his *ILP* goals helped keep us on track and provided evidence of growth.

The *Mid-Year Review* offers a second chance to step back from the daily rush and make midcourse corrections. The *Continuum of Teacher Development* is useful at this point in helping a teacher assess growth. In Steve's case, the rearview mirror of the *MYR* showed some remarkable accomplishments: he'd survived starting the year with his classrooms under construction

and had developed curriculum for his tech class that won praise from students and colleagues. Looking forward, he used the *MYR* to improve his grading system and plan for the second semester. In May we worked with the third tool, the *Professional Growth Reflections*. Once again, there were major achievements to celebrate. And, Steve used the *PGR* to plan for his classes next year. When he talked about the curriculum he'd created, I used it as an entry point for him to think about eventually pursuing a position in curriculum development.

Finally, while these three tools help guide our year, the *Collaborative Assessment Logs* link the tools together. Especially with

the *MYR* and *PGR*, it's powerful to look back over the weekly logs with a beginning teacher and see issues arise and be resolved. When Steve and I concluded the *PGR*, it was clear how far we'd come since that October afternoon when the sky was falling. It documented evidence of the challenges Steve surmounted as he moved toward becoming an excellent teacher, and it positioned him to carry our year's work together into the future. Perhaps most importantly, the mentoring tools give new teachers such as Steve a planning and reflection framework that rapidly advances their teaching. ■

GSCHWEND *continued from p. 5*

standard and set goals, Lalita created tiered groups that moved every type of student forward. In one class, Lalita tiered instruction by having students read poems of varying levels of complexity, reading difficulty, number of steps in the assignment directions, and concrete vs. abstractness. In another lesson, she tiered instructional activities according to students' interests. They chose supplementary texts according to their interests and completed activities tailored to that text. All tiered groups assessed the same standard, but students demonstrated learning via different tasks and texts.

In using the *Analysis of Student Work* to differentiate instruction, Lalita found that

two of her favorite differentiated activities involved monitoring students' progress and using Project Menus. During a coaching conversation we decided to try out these two differentiated strategies. Lalita empowered students to identify content standards, set learning goals, and then monitor progress toward meeting those goals. Students plotted their improvement on *Standards* graphs to set new goals.

Lalita used an assessment activity, Project Menu, after students finished reading *Rain of Gold*. From a menu of about six assessments, students chose one to demonstrate learning. Lalita noticed that when students charted their

own progress and used Project Menus, their motivation, interest, engagement, and achievement increased.

Indeed, with *Analysis of Student Work* Lalita became more proficient in standards-based lesson design, choosing standards-based assessments, designing tiered instruction, employing many types of flexible groupings, and pre-assessing student needs. She is a responsive teacher and respected educational leader in her school community.

Guskey, T., & Huberman, M. (1995). *Professional Development in Education: New Paradigms and Practices*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. ■

DISCOVER THE POWER of TEACHER INDUCTION

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NEW TEACHER CENTER

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The New Teacher Center
has developed a set of
tools and processes,
the National Formative
Assessment System
(FAS), designed to link
new teacher learning
and mentoring.

The **NTC FAS**
guides beginning
teachers as they develop
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and skills that ensure
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qualified and effective
teachers.

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